



THE LIBERTY BOYS OF '76

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post Office, February 4, 1901, by Frank Tousey.

No. 49.

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 6, 1901.

Price 5 Cents.

THE LIBERTY BOYS IN TORYVILLE; —OR— DICK SLATER'S FEARFUL RISK.

By HARRY MOORE.



It was taking a fearful risk, but Dick Slater was equal to it, and he plunged from the bridge into the stream, just as the Tories fired.

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CHAPTER I.

DICK SLATER AT WORK.

It was the first week in May, 1781.

The British army in the South, under Lord Rawdon, occupied Camden, in South Carolina.

Ten miles to the northward, at Clermont, the patriot force, under General Greene, was stationed.

The British force was so strong that Green did not dare attack, so he waited and watched.

He kept a close watch on the British, and on the afternoon of the 10th of May, one of Greene's spies, a youth named Dick Slater, came in and reported that the British had evacuated Camden.

Greene was excited.

"What is that you say—the British are leaving?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, General Greene."

Greene's face was aglow with delight.

He seemed to be delighted.

"If it is a genuine evacuation, all is, indeed, well," he said; "but it may be a trick.

Dick Slater shook his head.

"I hardly think so, sir," he said; "I do not think it is a trick. It has the appearance of a genuine movement."

"Very good; we will move down toward Camden, anyway, and if the British have really gone, we will take up our quarters in Camden."

General Greene issued the order to break camp, and an hour later the army was on the march southward.

It was dark when Hobkirk's Hill, two miles north of Camden, was reached, and so the patriot army went into camp.

General Greene called Dick to him and instructed the youth to go to Camden and see if the coast was clear.

Dick hastened away.

He was gone less than two hours, and when he returned he told General Greene that the British had gone for good, undoubtedly, as that was the word that he got from every one with whom he talked with in the town.

Next morning the patriot army marched into Camden and took possession of the town.

No sooner had this been done than General Greene sent for Dick, and when the youth appeared the general said:

"Dick, I have a task for you."

"What is it, General Greene?"

"I wish you to follow the British and learn where they are bound for, and what they are going to do, if possible."

Dick bowed.

"Very well, sir; I will go at once."

"I hardly think the British can be playing any trick, Dick," went on Greene, "but such a thing is possible, and I wish to be on my guard against it. The only way to be on guard is by keeping track of the enemy and knowing what it is doing."

"Very good, sir; I will follow the British, and see what they are doing, and where they are going."

"Exactly; and then return and report."

"Very well, sir."

An hour later Dick rode out of Camden and struck out toward the south.

He rode rapidly, for the British army had a day's start of him.

Still, as the British were on foot, while he had a horse, he thought he could easily sight them before evening.

"I ought to catch up with them somewhere in the vicinity of Fort Watson," thought Dick.

He rode steadily onward till noon, when he stopped at a farmhouse and ate dinner.

He questioned the farmer, and learned that the British had camped within a mile of his place the night before.

After an hour's rest Dick mounted and rode onward.

At five o'clock in the afternoon Dick drew rein on the top of a high hill and looked away toward the south.

In the distance, seemingly two miles away, Dick caught a glimpse of the British army, marching along.

"I thought so!" said Dick to himself, speaking aloud, as becomes a matter of habit with many when much alone.

"I was sure I would sight them, and I think they will encamp at Fort Watson, to-night."

"Do you, indeed?" spoke a cool voice, and turning in his saddle, quickly, Dick found himself covered by the muskets

of three British soldiers, who had stepped noiselessly out of a clump of bushes a few yards behind the youth.

CHAPTER II.

A BOLD DASH.

The youth was taken by surprise.

He had not been expecting anything of this kind.

He had not suspected that the British would have spies out behind the army.

And, after all, he did not think this had been done purposely.

He decided that the three soldiers had dropped out of the ranks and gone on some kind of an expedition off to one side, and that they were now on their way to catch up with their comrades.

It did not matter, though, they had him at a great disadvantage, and this was the main thing to be considered by Dick.

The redcoats saw the look of surprise on Dick's face, and laughed aloud.

"Took you by surprise, did we?" asked the same man who had first spoken.

Dick nodded.

"Yes, I shall have to admit that you did," he acknowledged.

Dick was willing to talk, in order to give him time to think up a course of procedure, for he did not intend to permit himself to be made a prisoner, if he could help it.

"You look surprised," said another of the three. "Who are you, anyway?"

"Me?"

"Yes, you."

"Oh, I'm no one in particular," was the careless reply; "I live near here."

"Oh, you do?"

"Yes."

"How near?"

"Oh, a couple miles."

"Humph! A couple of miles, eh?"

"Yes."

"Which direction?"

"To the northward."

"Ah! What are you doing down here?"

"Looking for some horses which disappeared last night."

"So that is what you are doing?"

"Yes."

"And did you think you would find them down this way?"

Dick pretended to hesitate.

"Well, I'll tell you what I did think, if you'll promise not to get mad," said Dick.

"Oh, we promise; eh, fellows?"

"Yes."

"Certainly."

This from the other two.

"Go ahead, young fellow, and tell us what you think."

"All right; I think that some of the soldiers took dad's horses!"

The redcoats glanced at each other.

"So that is what you think, is it?"

"Yes."

"And that is why you were so interested in the army, yonder?"

"Yes, mister," was Dick's reply.

Again the redcoats glanced at one another.

The glances were inquiring.

It was as much as to say, "What do you think about it, anyway?"

Slowly, one after another, the three shook their heads.

"I don't believe that story!" said one, presently.

"Nor I!" from another.

"It doesn't sound right to me," from the third.

Dick pretended to be surprised.

"Why don't you believe it?" he asked. "It is the truth."

Again the redcoats shook their heads.

"I can't believe it," said one. "Do you know, you don't look like an ordinary farmer's boy at all?"

"Don't I?"

"No; and I don't believe you are one, either."

"I don't see why you shouldn't believe it."

"Well, I do; the story that you believe the soldiers have taken your father's horses, and that you are following to see whether or not this is true, is rather too washy for us to believe. Why, what could you do if you were to find that such was the case? You could not recover the horses."

"No, I s'pose not," replied Dick; "but we would have the satisfaction of knowing where the horses went."

"Bah! that wouldn't be any satisfaction. Do you know what I think?"

Dick shook his head.

"No," he replied, "I can't say that I do."

"Then I'll tell you: I think you are a rebel, and a spy!"

Dick pretended to be greatly surprised, although he had expected to hear the redcoat say just what he did.

"What's that!" he exclaimed. "You don't mean to say that you think I am a rebel?"

"Yes; and a spy, as I have said. And what is more, you are our prisoner. Get down off that horse, and do it quickly!"

Of course, the redcoat figured that there being three against one, and the three with leveled muskets, the youth would not dare refuse to obey the order; but this was because he did not know the youth in question was Dick Slater, the famous spy.

Had he known that, he would have known that the youth would not obey the command.

Dick had been watching the redcoats closely, and was on the watch for just what had occurred, viz.: The redcoats, during the conversation, had become tired of holding their muskets out at arm's length, and had let the muzzles drop, and the butt of the weapons slip back under their right arm, so as to make the weapons easy to hold.

Feeling sure that the redcoats could not fire instantly, Dick suddenly plunged the spurs into the flanks of his horse, and the maddened animal, with wild snorts of rage and pain, leaped wildly forward down the incline.

Dick threw himself forward on the horse's neck, just as the crack! crack! crack! of the muskets rang out.

CHAPTER III.

DICK GETS EVEN WITH THE REDCOATS.

The bullets whistled past Dick, but were above him.

The redcoats had fired too high, not having taken into consideration the fact that the fugitive would drop forward upon the neck of the horse.

Before the redcoats could draw their pistols and fire, Dick was out of range.

A yell of rage went up from the disappointed redcoats.

"Oh, yell, if you want to!" said Dick, grimly. "I guess you won't accomplish much in that way."

Dick rode rapidly onward a distance of a mile and a half, and then he rode into the timber.

Dismounting, when he had penetrated the timber to a distance of two hundred yards, Dick tied the horse to a tree.

"I will wait here till evening," thought the youth; "it is only about four miles to Fort Watson, and I am confident the redcoats will camp there to-night, so I can reconnoitre their camp after dark."

Dick made his way back to the road, and, concealing himself in a thicket right by the roadside, waited.

He felt sure the three soldiers from whom he had just

escaped would come this way, and he thought that if he could hear their conversation as they passed he might hear something of interest.

He waited about fifteen minutes, and then the redcoats came in sight up the road.

They came along, walking slowly, as they were tired.

Dick listened eagerly to the conversation of the three as they drew near, but they were talking about personal affairs, and the youth gained no information.

Just as the redcoats came opposite Dick they paused.

"Let's rest a while," said one; "that young fellow back yonder was right, and the army will camp at Fort Watson, so we can take our time in getting there. There's no hurry, and I'm tired."

"So am I."

"And I."

It happened that there was a large boulder-like rock right by the little thicket in which Dick was concealed, and the three redcoats took a seat on the rock.

They talked of various matters, but did not touch upon anything that interested Dick.

He was disappointed.

He almost felt like stepping out and reproaching the three soldiers for not being kind enough to talk about matters which interested him.

Suddenly Dick was startled.

His horse gave utterance to a loud neigh!

Doubtless the animal had noticed that its master was gone, and, feeling lonesome, was calling to him.

The redcoats heard the neigh, of course.

They, too, were startled.

They leaped down off the rock and looked up and down the road.

No one was in sight.

"The sound came from that direction," said one, pointing toward the timber at the side of the road.

"I believe you are right about that," said another.

"I'll tell you," exclaimed the third, "it is that young scoundrel who got away from us back yonder. He has entered the timber and tied his horse, and may be watching and listening to us even now."

Then out from the thicket, pistol in hand, stepped Dick Slater, and confronted the startled redcoats.

"That was a good guess," said Dick, calmly; "I am right here, as you see, and now what are you going to do about it?"

The underjaws of the redcoats dropped.

They stared into the muzzles of the pistols in consternation.

They were taken at a decided disadvantage.

The youth had his pistols cocked and leveled, while their muskets lay on the ground at their feet, and their pistols were in their belts.

Before they could secure their muskets or draw their pistols, the youth could shoot two of them down, without a doubt, and the probabilities were that he would then get the better of the remaining one of the trio.

For a few moments there was silence, and then one of the redcoats gasped:

"You here?"

"As you see," smiled Dick; "I'm here, and this time the advantage is on my side, as you, no doubt, perceive."

The redcoats made an involuntary movement toward the muskets, but paused as Dick said, sharply and sternly:

"Stop! Don't you try that, or it will be the worse for you! Just let those muskets lie where they are or you will speedily find yourselves in a condition which will make muskets of no use to you."

"What do you want?" hoarsely asked one of the redcoats.

"What do I want?"

"Yes."

"Nothing at all—save that you throw your pistols down there alongside the muskets and then walk quietly onward, down the road."

"Why do you wish to take our arms away from us?"

"In order that you may not be in danger of hurting yourselves—or me. Do as I tell you!"

The redcoats looked at one another, seemed to realize that there was no getting out of the predicament into which they had stumbled, and with audible groans they drew their pistols from their belts and placed them on the ground, alongside the muskets.

"Now, walk!" ordered Dick. "Walk straight onward, down the road, and don't even look back."

"Can we come back, after a while, and get our weapons?" asked one.

"No," said Dick; "your weapons are lost to you for good and all. They will never again be turned against the patriots. Go!"

The three discomfited redcoats turned and walked slowly away, up the road, and had gone perhaps a dozen paces when around a bend, a quarter of a mile distant, rode a dozen redcoats, coming on at a gallop.

CHAPTER IV.

LIVELY TIMES.

The instant the three redcoats saw their comrades on horseback, they set up a shout.

"Quick!" they yelled. "Come on, and you will catch a rebel spy! Hurry!"

Then they whirled quickly.

A cry of anger and discomfiture escaped them.

The youth had disappeared.

The instant the redcoats rode around the bend, Dick leaped into the thicket, pausing only long enough to secure the pistols and muskets of the redcoats.

The pistols Dick thrust into his belt, but the musket he broke across the first tree he came to.

"There; I said they should not again be turned on the patriots, and I have kept my word," murmured Dick.

Then he hastened to where his horse was tied.

Untying the animal, Dick led him away, through the timber as rapidly as was possible.

He felt confident that the redcoats would give chase.

And in this he was right.

As soon as the three redcoats told their comrades the story of how they had been treated by the youth, all set out on the track of Dick.

Their horses they left behind, tying them to trees at the roadside.

They came upon the broken muskets at once.

Curses escaped the lips of the owners of the muskets.

"Just look at that, will you!" cried one. "The young scoundrel has broken our muskets!"

"You know, he said they should never again be turned on the patriots," said another.

"That's so; he did say that."

"Come along, or he will get away!" cried one of the others, impatiently.

They hastened into the timber and soon reached the spot where Dick's horse had been tied.

"Here's where he had his horse tethered!" cried one.

"Yes; spread out, fellows, and we will surely be able to run him down soon."

The redcoats spread out, fan-shape, and hastened onward, on the youth's trail—as they supposed.

They were dealing with one who was their superior in cunning, however.

Dick knew that the redcoats would give chase, and he figured that they would, in all probability, leave the horses behind.

So instead of going straight onward, as the redcoats thought he would most likely do, Dick made a half circuit and struck the road nearly half a mile below the point where he had entered the timber.

Dick glanced back up the road.

He saw the horses standing, tied to the trees, at the roadside.

Dick stood still and pondered a few moments.

He listened intently, but could hear nothing of his enemies.

"It would be a good joke on the redcoats if I were to go and capture their horses," thought Dick.

He hesitated but a few moments longer, and then, mounting, he rode back up the road in the direction of the point where the horses stood.

He rode slowly, for if he had urged his horse to a gallop the hoofbeats would have been heard, and the redcoats would have come rushing back in a hurry.

It did not take long to reach the place where the horses stood, however, and leaping to the ground, Dick quickly untied the animals and tied them to each other by means of the halter straps.

Then Dick remounted his own horse, and, holding to the halter strap of one of the horses, rode away down the road, leading the redcoats' horses.

The redcoats who had ventured into the timber in chase of Dick did not go very far.

They soon realized that they could not hope to catch the fugitive, and presently the leader gave the word to about face, and return.

They turned and made their way back, and were not very long in reaching the road.

When they got there they found their horses missing.

They stared at one another in amazement and dismay.

Where were the horses?

Then one of the three redcoats who had seen enough of Dick to cause them to have a great deal of respect for him, exclaimed:

"That rebel spy did it! You can wager he has slipped back here and taken the horses while we thought we were chasing him through the timber."

Curses, loud and deep, escaped the lips of the redcoats.

At this instant wild yells came from just beyond the bend in the road—which was about a quarter of a mile distant.

"What has broken loose now?" cried one of the redcoats. "Come on, boys, and we'll find out what is up."

The redcoats set out down the road at a run.

CHAPTER V.

"OPEN IN THE NAME OF THE KING!"

The explanation of the wild yells which the redcoats had heard was very simple.

Dick had just disappeared around the bend when the

redcoats arrived where they had left their horses and found the animals gone.

The bend was a long one, and Dick had gone but a short distance farther when he suddenly came face to face with another party of redcoats.

"Great guns! but the woods is full of redcoats!" thought Dick.

But if the youth was amazed, so were his enemies.

They pulled up their horses and stared at the youth in wonder.

Dick was the first to act.

He realized that he would have to do something, and do it quickly.

He let go of the halter strap and struck the horse next him a blow, at the same time giving it a kick in the ribs.

He emitted a shrill yell, also.

This started the horses.

They plunged forward and dashed right toward the redcoats in front of them.

The British were mounted, but they did not relish being run down by a drove of frightened horses, and they began yelling at a great rate, in an effort to keep the horses back.

Their actions seemed to have an opposite effect.

The horses came on all the faster.

The next instant there was a great mixup.

The dozen animals were tied together, and they were soon tangled up with the horses ridden by the redcoats.

There was a great leaping and plunging of the horses, and a terrible yelling by the redcoats.

It was this that the redcoats back up the road had heard.

Dick did not delay longer, now.

He saw his chance and took it.

He quickly rode into the timber and rode as rapidly as possible.

He wished to get out of the neighborhood as soon as possible.

"There are too many redcoats around here to suit me," thought Dick; "I must get away from here to some quiet spot, and there lie low till affairs quiet down."

Dick rode onward for half an hour.

Then he suddenly came out into a clearing, on the bank of the Santee River.

Right on the bank of the river stood a cabin.

The cabin was a small affair, and of logs.

"Good!" thought Dick. "Here is just the spot for me to stop and wait for things to get settled down, and I can get something to eat here, too, likely."

Dick rode up to the door of the cabin and dismounted.

He advanced to the door and was just going to knock

when the door came open and the youth found himself looking down the muzzle of a rifle.

"Hello! What does this mean?" exclaimed Dick.

"Hold hard, stranger!" said the man with the gun, in a calm, dispassionate voice. "Don't be in er hurry! Et hain't good manners, nohow yo' kin fix et."

The man who held the rifle was a typical timber settler of the region.

He was half farmer, half hunter, and withal a dangerous man, if an enemy.

Of this fact Dick was well aware, for he had had considerable experience in the South, and had seen a good many such men.

Hence he was anxious to ascertain whether or not the man was an enemy.

"Why do you treat me in this manner?" Dick asked. "Is this Southern hospitality?"

"Waal, et's ther kin' uv hospertality I inten' ter dish out ter ther redcoats whenever I gits ther chanst, stranger," was the quiet reply.

This reply pleased Dick.

It seemed to indicate that the man was a patriot.

"Whom do you take me to be?" asked the youth.

"I take yo' ter be wun uv them thar redcoats whut kim through this part of ther kentry an hour er so ergo."

"So I judged," replied the youth; "but you are mistaken, sir. I am not a redcoat. Don't you see I haven't their uniform on?"

"But yo' c'u'd easy enuff wear somethin' else besides er red coat an' still be er Britisher, c'u'dn't yo'?" remarked the man, shrewdly.

"Yes, I could do so, no doubt," replied Dick, "but I am not a redcoat—in fact, I have just been having a time getting away from some of the scoundrels."

"Is thet so, shore enuff?" the man asked, hesitatingly.

"Indeed it is."

"An' yo' hain't no Britisher?"

Dick shook his head, decidedly.

"No more than you are," he replied; "I'm a patriot, from the army under General Greene, and I am following the British army in order to spy upon it."

"Is thet so, shore enuff?"

"Indeed it is!"

The man still hesitated.

He eyed Dick, searchingly.

The youth met the gaze unflinchingly.

"Say, d'yo' know ther Swamp Fox?" the man asked, abruptly.

"General Marion?" exclaimed Dick. "Yes, I know him well."

"An' yo' air er fr'en' uv his'n?"

"I am; I have worked under General Marion more than once."

"Yo' hev?"

"Yes; I was with him when Fort Watson was captured, not long ago."

The man lowered the rifle.

He still seemed somewhat suspicious, however.

"Whut's yo' name?" he asked.

"Dick Slater."

The man started.

"Whut!" he exclaimed. "Not Dick Slater, ther boy spy?"

Dick nodded.

"The same," he replied.

"W'y, I've heerd ther Swamp Fox speak uv yo' more'n onct."

"Have you?"

"Yas; an' yo're welcome ter ther home uv Hank Pardee!"

Hank Pardee was indeed a hospitable fellow, now that he was assured that his guest was of the right sort.

He led Dick's horse down to the river and gave him a drink, and then tied the animal in a sort of shed, which was built against the bank, right below the cabin, and back of it.

He gave the horse some corn and some coarse slough grass, and then they went back up the bank and entered the cabin.

"I'll git supper in er jiffy, now," said Hank, and he went to work.

He bustled around and soon had some pork frying, and half an hour later the two sat down to an appetizing meal—for persons like they, who were hungry and not fastidious.

They had just finished the meal and risen from the table when there came a loud knock on the door, followed by an imperative voice, saying:

"Open the door! Open in the name of the king!"

CHAPTER VI.

IN DANGEROUS QUARTERS.

The two stared at each other in consternation.

"The redcoats!" whispered Dick. "They have tracked me here!"

Hank placed his finger to his lips to impose silence, and then he stole to a ladder at one side and climbed up into the loft.

There came another knock on the door.

Then again the voice called out:

"Open in the name of the king!"

Dick maintained perfect silence.

A few moments later Hank came back down from out of the loft.

"There air erbout er dozen uv ther critters out thar," he whispered; "I think we kin fight 'em off."

"Is there any way that I can get out of the cabin and slip away, Hank?" asked Dick. "Then there would be no need of fighting them, and you would not get into trouble. You know, I want to go on to where the British army is in camp, anyway."

"I know thet; an' thar is er way ter git out, too, but I hate fur yo' ter hev ter cut an' run fur et. We kin lick 'em, an' I hain't erfraid ter git 'em mad at me. Ef they burn this cabin I kin build another."

"I know, but that would cause you a lot of trouble and work, and it is not necessary. Show me the way to get out, and let me go."

"All right; come erlong."

Hank led the way into a little shed-like room at the rear of the cabin, a door opening into it.

Stooping, he lifted a loose board, and looking down, Dick saw that they were right over the shed in which the horse was tied.

"Jump down an' lead yer hoss out," instructed Hank; "I guess yo' hed better take ter ther water and swim ercrost ter ther other side. Thet'll be safer than ter try ter git up onter ther bank on this side."

"I think so; much obliged, Hank. Now you go back and fool the redcoats into thinking you are one of them."

"I'll do thet, all right; good-by!"

The two shook hands, and then, as another thunderous rapping was heard on the front door, Dick leaped down into the shed, and Hank replaced the board and re-entered the cabin and closed the door.

Dick quickly untied his horse, led him out of the shed and down to the water's edge.

Dick was about to mount and ride into the water when the sounds of a melee came to his ears.

There were several shots, some yells, and the noise as of a scrimmage in the cabin.

"They have attacked Hank!" thought Dick. "I can't go away and leave him to be murdered! I must go to his assistance!"

Dick leaped up the embankment and rushed around toward the front of the cabin, drawing his pistols as he did so.

As he leaped around the corner and caught sight of

some of the redecoats, Dick gave utterance to a loud yell, and then cried out:

"Come on, boys! We've got them now! Give it to them!"

Then he fired two shots, and throwing the empty pistols at the heads of the amazed and startled redecoats, the youth drew two more pistols and fired two more shots.

He kept on yelling at the top of his voice, and the redecoats, imagining that they were attacked in force, took to their heels.

Even those who were within the cabin, fighting with Hank, became frightened, and rushed out, followed by Hank.

Dick threw his second pair of pistols at these redecoats, and drawing another pair—it will be remembered that he had taken the pistols away from the three British soldiers whom he had encountered on the road, that afternoon—fired two more shots, which assisted materially in accelerating the speed with which the redecoats were getting away from that neighborhood.

Dick was glad to see that Hank was alive.

He feared that the big settler had been killed in the melee in the cabin.

"Waal, we licked 'em!" exclaimed Hank, pausing and looking in the direction in which the redecoats had gone, a comical grin on his face. "I tole yo' we c'u'd do et, didn't I?"

"Yes," replied Dick; "but how came they to attack you?"

"Waal, they wuz so all-fired sassy when I opened ther door thet I torked back ter 'em, an' they said ez how I wuz er 'rebel,' an' went fur me, red hot."

"I heard them, and so came to your assistance at once."

"Et's er good thing fur me thet yo' did," with another grin; "et'd a-be'n good-by, Hank, ef yo' hedn't, fur thar wuz too many uv ther cusses fur me, an' they'd a-settled me shore! I owes yo' my life, I reckon, Dick."

"But you wouldn't have gotten into the trouble but for me, so we are only even," said Dick.

"Oh, I dunno; I guess they'd a-smelt me out, even ef yo' hedn't a-come heer. But, come, let's git inter ther cabin afore some uv them cusses come back an' take er shot at us."

Crack! crack!

Two shots, and two bullets whistled past the heads of Dick and Hank.

The two leaped through the open doorway into the cabin, quick as a flash, and closed and barred the door.

"Thet wuz er clost call!" said Hank, calmly.

"Do you think they will attack you again?" asked Dick.

"I dunno; I shouldn't wonder."

The two waited and listened, but heard nothing to indicate that another attack was to be made, and presently they opened the door and looked out.

Everything seemed quiet.

"I guess they've giv' et up an' gone erway," said Hank.

"It looks that way," agreed Dick.

Then he bade Hank good-by, and, mounting his horse, rode away through the timber.

When he reached the road he turned down it and rode onward in the direction of Fort Watson.

Dick reached the vicinity of the redcoat's encampment half an hour later, and tying his horse in the timber, slipped up close to the fort for the purpose of reconnoitring.

Dick judged that Lord Rawdon, the British commander, would have his tent within the walls of the fort, and so, putting all his skill into the effort, the youth began making his way toward the fort.

He had to steal past group after group of the soldiers, and this was a very difficult thing to do, but Dick finally accomplished it and reached the entrance to the fort.

The entrance was a gateway in front, and the gate was not closed.

Just within the entrance stood a sentinel.

Dick saw the soldier, and did not dare try to get past him.

Dick hardly knew what to do.

He stole along the stockade wall until he was at the rear.

He tested board after board, and finally succeeded in finding one that was loose.

Dick pushed this board aside.

He peered through.

There were several tents between him and the sentinel on duty at the gate, and Dick slipped through the opening.

In nearly every tent Dick came to he heard voices, and presently he came to a tent in which was Lord Rawdon, as Dick learned after listening to the conversation for a few moments.

Dick lay down behind this tent and lay there for twenty minutes, at least, listening to the conversation going on within—the conversation being between Lord Rawdon and a couple of his officers.

Dick learned a few things which he thought would be of value to General Greene.

Presently Dick heard some one enter the tent.

It was an orderly, and he said that Lancaster had got back, and wished to make his report.

"Send him here at once," ordered Lord Rawdon.

The orderly withdrew, and presently returned, accompanied by another man, who proved to be Lancaster.

Dick listened to this man with interest, for he was a

spy, and had come to report that he had remained behind the British army and had seen the "rebel" army enter Camden.

He also said that he had seen a "rebel" spy leave the town and set out on the trail of the British.

"I think the spy in question was no other than that young fellow, Dick Slater," the man went on; "and the chances are that if that is the case, he is in the camp at this very moment, for he is a very daring fellow."

"Do you really think he would dare try to enter the camp?" asked Lord Rawdon, doubtingly.

"Oh, yes," was the reply; "he delights in doing just such daring things as that."

"Well, I will have a general search of the camp made, and if he is here he will be found."

"That is a good plan," said the spy, "and I would suggest that you do not neglect to search within the very walls of this fort, for he is as likely to be here as anywhere."

"I will give the order at once."

The British commander sent out the order, and ten minutes later search was being made everywhere throughout the camp for the "rebel" spy who was suspected of being hidden somewhere.

The spy had finished his report, and he now withdrew, and soon afterward the two officers did the same.

Lord Rawdon had announced his intention of lying down, and Dick soon heard the creaking of the British officer's cot, and knew Lord Rawdon had put his words into effect.

The orderly entered, and Lord Rawdon said:

"Tell me if the 'rebel' spy is found, James; now blow out the light."

"I will do so," was the reply, and then James blew out the light and withdrew.

Dick rose and stole to the loose board and looked out.

Everywhere he could see men moving about, carrying torches.

"Jove! it would be impossible for me to slip through and make my escape while the search is going on," thought Dick; "I guess that I shall have to remain here until the search is ended, and affairs have quieted down, and then I can get out of the encampment."

Men were climbing the steep sides of the Indian mound on which the fort was built, and there seemed to be no chance for Dick to escape or to keep from being discovered.

"They are closing in on the fort, and will keep it surrounded while they search within the walls for me," thought Dick. "Well, I hardly know what to do."

Presently some soldiers entered the fort bearing torches, and Dick realized that he was in a predicament, for there

were others just outside the walls, and he would not dare leave the fort.

The men began moving about in the fort, looking in every nook and cranny that they came to, and Dick realized that they would soon be around where he was.

What should he do?

Where could he hide?

CHAPTER VII.

THE BURNED CABIN.

Dick crouched behind the tent occupied by Lord Rawdon, and as the men with the torches drew near to the tent, a thought struck Dick.

It was a bold thought, but the youth did not hesitate.

He proceeded to put the idea into execution.

Lying flat down beside the tent, Dick softly lifted the side and rolled in under.

He did this in such a noiseless manner that he felt sure he had not been heard by the occupant of the tent.

The youth dropped the canvas and lay still.

He was now within the tent of the British commander.

"They will hardly think to look inside Lord Rawdon's tent," thought Dick; "and I may escape being detected, after all."

Presently the soldiers with the torches came near the tent and looked all around.

Dick was between two fires, so to speak.

He had to look out for Lord Rawdon, and for the men outside who were searching for him.

Presently the men finished the search, however, and paused near the tent and discussed the advisability of reporting their non-success to the commander.

They finally decided not to disturb him.

"He said for me to let him know if you were successful," said the orderly; "and as you have not been successful, I don't think there is any call to bother him."

It was decided that Lord Rawdon should not be disturbed, and this suited Dick, exactly.

Presently the men went away, and after waiting perhaps ten minutes, Dick lifted the edge of the tent and rolled out into the open air.

He listened a few moments and heard nothing.

Everything was quiet.

He made his way to the loose board, and looked out.

He could see men seated about the camp-fires, but there were no moving groups.

The search for him was over.

"Well, they didn't find me!" thought Dick. "Wouldn't they be angry, though, if they knew how I escaped them?"

Feeling safe, now, Dick stepped through the opening and stood outside the fort wall.

He decided not to risk trying to get out of the encampment just yet.

So he seated himself, with his back to the wall, and waited.

He remained where he was for perhaps half an hour, and then, feeling that the camp was off its guard he quietly descended the side of the mound.

He was soon on the level ground, and then the hard work begun.

Dick was an old hand, however.

He took his time and went at the work in a careful manner.

He knew that the worst mistake he could make would be to try to get out of the camp in a hurry.

It would be much better and safer to go slowly, and with extreme caution.

That was the way Dick worked it.

He moved very slowly.

Indeed, he was half an hour in going two hundred yards.

Even then he was not safe, and moved very carefully.

The worst of it was over, however, and after ten minutes more of this work, Dick drew a long breath and moved away at a fairly rapid pace.

He was soon well within the timber, and made his way to where he had left his horse.

The horse was where Dick had left him, and the youth untied the animal and was just in the act of mounting when there came a quick rush of footsteps, and Dick felt himself seized.

He instantly grappled with his assailant and a struggle began.

The horse was a well-trained animal, and moved but a few paces.

Dick and his assailant struggled fiercely.

The youth wondered why his opponent had not used a weapon, but soon came to the conclusion that the fellow wished to capture him and take him into camp in triumph.

"That is very laudable," thought Dick; "but I shall have to disappoint him."

Dick, although taken by surprise, soon got a hold upon the other, which equalized matters.

There were few better hand-to-hand fighters than Dick.

He had done so much of it that he had become very expert, indeed.

He presently succeeded in getting hold of his opponent's

throat, and once this hold was secured, Dick felt that he was safe.

He knew it was a question of only a minute or so before he would succeed in getting the better of his foe.

It turned out this way.

Dick choked his assailant into insensibility in a very short time, and, dropping the senseless form to the ground, Dick hastened to mount his horse and ride away.

Dick was soon on the road, and he rode at a gallop until in the vicinity of the cabin of his friend, Hank Pardee.

Then he entered the timber and rode slowly till he reached the clearing in which had stood the cabin.

I say "had stood," for the cabin was not there now.

There was only a heap of smouldering ruins.

Dick rode up and sat on his horse and gazed upon the ruins in wonder.

"Well, well! Who can have done this, I wonder?" he exclaimed, half aloud. "I suppose the redcoats must have done it, though," he said.

Just then there came an interruption.

CHAPTER VIII.

BACK AT CAMDEN.

It was a peaceable interruption, this time, however.

Out from among the shadows, into the flickering light of the smouldering ruins, came a tall figure.

"Hello, Dick! Is thet yo'?" asked a hearty voice.

It was Hank.

"Yes, it is I, Hank," replied Dick. "Who has done this?"

"Ther redcoats, Dick."

"I thought so."

"Yas; they come back not long arter yo' went erway, an' called on me ter come out an' surrender; an' w'en I refused they set ther cabin on fire. Uv course, I got out ther rear way, but I couldn't do nothin' ter save ther cabin, an' et burnt down."

"That is too bad."

"Oh, well, et c'u'd a-be'n worse."

"True; it would have been worse if they had got you."

"Yas; they'd a-made et warm fur me, ef they'd a-got me, I 'xpeck."

"No doubt of it; but what will you do now, Hank?"

"Me? Oh, I'm all right," with a chuckle; "yo' see, I've got ernoother cabin not fur frum heer."

"You have?"

"Yas; an' now, come erlong with me. We'll go tha an' turn in fur ther night."

Hank led the way through the timber, a distance of half a mile or so, and then they came to another cabin almost like the one that had been burned.

There was a shed for the horse, and after putting the animal in the shed the two entered the cabin.

They talked a while, and then lay down and slept soundly until morning.

Dick remained at the cabin till after dinner, next day, and then, mounting his horse, he bade his friend good-by and rode away.

He headed toward the south, and rode till well along toward night, when he made some inquiries at a farmhouse; and finding that he was close upon the British army, he decided to remain at the farmhouse till next day.

This he did, and next morning, when he went to reconnoitre the British, he found that they had gone into permanent camp at a place called Monk's Corners.

Dick remained there all that day and the next night, trying to learn the plans of the British, and he succeeded in learning sufficient for his needs, he thought; so that night he mounted his horse and took the back track.

He was not so long in making the return trip as he had been in coming, and when he reached Camden he went at once and reported to General Greene.

The general was very well pleased with what Dick had seen and learned.

"Now I can do some work which I have had in mind for some time," he said; "I am going to send Marion and Lee to capture forts Motte and Granby. Do you wish to go with them?"

"Yes, indeed!" exclaimed Dick. "I shall be delighted if you will permit me to take my 'Liberty Boys' and go along."

"Very well, you may do so."

Dick and his "Liberty Boys" accompanied Marion and Lee in their expeditions, and assisted in capturing the two forts, which was accomplished without much trouble.

At the same time General Sumpter captured Orangeburg, and soon afterward Lee, with Dick and the "Liberty Boys" to assist him, captured Augusta, just across the line of Georgia.

Only one place remained to be captured by the patriots now.

This was a place called Ninety-Six.

General Greene's forces now laid siege to Ninety-Six, but it was strongly garrisoned and amply provisioned, and for twenty-eight days successfully held out against the patriots.

Lord Rawdon, learning what was going on, got a lot of men from Charleston and came up to Ninety-Six in all haste, and Greene was forced to withdraw.

Rawdon soon saw that he could not hope to hold Ninety-Six, however, and on the 29th of June he evacuated the place and retired to Orangeburg.

Greene and his army followed, and took up a position on the high hills of Santee.

Here they formed a permanent camp, and the patriot general decided to let his men rest a while.

They had been working hard and faithfully since December, and were almost worn out.

Then, too, Greene wished to recruit his army.

He proceeded to do so.

The British commander, Rawdon, proceeded to do the same thing.

There were many Tories in that part of the country, but not so many as there were patriots.

One day General Greene called Dick into his tent and told him that he had some work for him to do.

He said that he had received word from some of his new recruits to the effect that fifty or sixty miles to the westward, in the mountains, there was a place called Toryville, in which no one not a Tory was allowed to remain for a moment.

Greene stated further that the recruits who had given him the information, had said that the people of Toryville were making up a regiment to send to Lord Rawdon at Orangeburg.

"I wish you to go and see whether or not this is the truth, Dick," said General Greene; "and if you find that it is the truth, you must hasten back here with the news, and I will send a sufficient force to capture or disperse the regiment of Tories."

Dick said he would start at once, and hastened away to make his preparations.

This did not take long, and having talked with the recruits who had given General Greene his information, and learned where the town of Toryville was supposed to be located, Dick mounted his horse and rode away toward the west.

CHAPTER IX.

IN TORYVILLE.

Dick rode steadily onward all that day.

It was nearly sundown when he stopped at a cabin in the foothills and asked if he could stay over night.

He was told that he could if he could put up with the scanty accommodations which the owner of the cabin had to offer.

Dick said he was not at all particular, and that if he could have some cornbread and pork and a vacant spot on the floor, he would be content.

He spent the night at the cabin, and did very well.

After breakfast next morning, just before he mounted to resume his journey, Dick asked his host if he knew of a place called Toryville.

The man scratched his head and said he believed he had "heern tell uv sech er place," but he didn't know just where it was, save that it was to the westward.

Dick had to be satisfied with this meagre information, and rode on his way.

The road he was following wound and twisted around among the foothills, and later on among the mountains, in a fashion that was wonderful to see, but which was necessary in order to avoid coming to an abrupt end at some precipice.

Dick rode onward till nearly noon, and was beginning to think he was getting to a region where nobody lived, when suddenly he emerged from the mouth of a narrow ravine, into a good-sized valley.

The valley was at least two miles wide and stretched away toward the north as far as the eye would reach.

But this was not what caused Dick to utter an exclamation of pleasure.

The sight of a town a mile or so distant was what caused this.

The houses of the town were plainly visible, and some of them seemed to be of very good size, two or three stories at least.

"I'll wager a good deal that that place is 'Torryville,'" said Dick to himself.

He sat on his horse and gazed toward the town for several minutes in silence.

He was debating the best plan of procedure.

He wished to do the work which he had come to do, and do it in the safest manner.

At last he made up his mind what he would do.

He would pretend that he had come to join the regiment which was supposed to be recruiting in the town.

"I will pretend that I am a Tory—one of the biggest in this part of the country," thought Dick; "and I guess I will come out all right."

Having so decided, Dick urged his horse forward and rode toward the town at a gallop.

As he drew near the town he saw men come out into the street and watch him approaching.

When he reached the town and started down the main street, he found scores of men standing on the sidewalk, looking at him.

Dick paid no attention, seemingly, but in reality he was watching the men closely.

Dick did not like the men's looks.

There were a great many fierce-looking fellows, and the youth saw that they were looking at him suspiciously, even threateningly.

"I shall have to look out or I will get into trouble very quickly," the youth said to himself.

He rode slowly onward, keeping a lookout for a livery stable, but saw no signs of one; and when he had reached the centre of the town he suddenly found himself surrounded by a crowd of at least two hundred men.

"Hol' on thar!" called out a big, black-whiskered man, who seemed to be recognized as a leader. "Jes' hol' up, young feller!"

Dick instantly brought his horse to a standstill.

"All right, sir," he said; "there you are."

Then he lifted his hat and bowed and smiled at the scowling faces of the men who surrounded him.

"How are you, gentlemen?" he said, in a light, jocular tone. "I'm glad to see you; and, say, is this Toryville?"

"Yes," replied the black-whiskered man, "this is Toryville—an' whut ef et is?"

"Why, then I'm glad to know it, that's what."

"Oh, yo' air?"

"Yes."

There was a murmur from the crowd, though Dick could not determine its significance.

"Who air yo', young feller?" asked the black-whiskered man.

"My name is Ben Burton," replied Dick.

"Whar yo' frum?"

"I am from the North, originally, but just at the present time I am from nowhere in particular."

"How long since yo' left ther North?"

"Six months."

"Whut yo' doin' down here?"

"I'm traveling around for my health."

"Oh, thet's et?"

"Yes."

"Humph! Yo' don't look sickly."

Dick smiled.

"I know I do not now," he replied, promptly. "Coming South so benefited my health that I made up my mind to remain here indefinitely."

"Oh, thet's et? Yo' like et down here, do yo'?"

"Yes, indeed."

"How did yo' happen ter cum ter Toryville?"

Dick saw an eager look on the faces of the men surrounding him.

"I'll tell you how it happens that I came here," said Dick; "I heard that you people of Toryville were organizing a regiment to send to join Lord Rawdon at Orangeburg, and as I am a loyal king's man and would like the chance to strike a few blows in the service of King George, I made up my mind to come here and join the regiment."

"Oh, thet's et? W'y heven't yo' be'n fightin' fur King George afore this?"

"Because my health did not permit; I feel so strong and well now, however, that I am confident I can stand the hardships of a soldier's life as well as any one."

"I sh'u'd think yo' c'u'd."

"I am sure that I can; and now, sir, will you be so kind as to tell me where I will find the recruiting officer?"

"Right here."

The black-whiskered man straightened up and swelled out his chest.

"Oh," said Dick, "you're he, eh?"

"Yas; I'm Jeff Tompkins—Big Jeff, most everybody calls me—an' I'm ther recrootin' officer, an'll be ther kunnel uv ther regiment."

"Good!" exclaimed Dick. "I'm glad that I ran across you. Will you let me join your regiment?"

Tompkins hesitated.

"Waal," he said, "I'll see; thar's no hurry, yo' know. Yo' kin camp down here in Toryville an' later on I'll let yo' know erbout ther matter."

"Very well," said Dick; "I will do as you suggest. And I hope that you will decide to take me into your regiment. By the way, will you direct me to a tavern where I can get lodgings and where my horse will be taken care of?"

"Sart'inly," was the reply; and Tompkins directed Dick to a tavern which was about a block distant.

Dick first rode to the stable at the rear of the tavern and saw to having his horse taken care of.

Then Dick made his way around to the front of the tavern and entered.

He found himself in a large room in which were a score or more men—for the most part rough, uncouth, but hardy mountaineers.

The room was a combined office and barroom, and the majority of those present were patronizing the bar quite liberally.

All eyes were on Dick as he entered, and as the youth was walking toward the landlord's desk, a big, tough-looking fellow, with shaggy hair and beard, and bleary eyes, suddenly barred Dick's way.

He stood with hands on his hips, his arms akimbo, an insolent, leering smile on his face.

"Hullo!" he cried. "So yo' air ther youngster whut wants ter jine ther regiment, air yo'?"

CHAPTER X.

DICK ASTONISHES THE NATIVES.

As the reader is aware, Dick was nobody's fool.

A shrewder youth than he never lived.

He knew that the ruffian—for such the fellow evidently was—meant mischief.

Everybody in the room seemed to realize this and every eye was upon the two.

Dick was one of those fellows who, when satisfied that trouble could not be avoided, always liked to meet it more than half way.

He decided to do so in this case, and when the ruffian asked or asserted, rather, that Dick was the youth who wished to join the Tory regiment, the youth promptly replied:

"Yes, I'm the fellow; and what business is it of yours?"

"Hey?—whut's thet!" almost gasped the ruffian. "Whut did yo' say?"

"I said, 'whut business is that of yours?'"

The big fellow gasped again, while a murmur of amazement went up from the inmates of the room.

All were surprised by the youth's temerity in speaking thus to one who looked as if capable of eating him without any trouble.

The ruffian, after gasping, grinned in a sickly manner, and then as he heard the exclamations of his comrades, a wicked look appeared on his face.

"Say, I reckon yo' don' know who I am, do yo'?" he howled.

Dick shook his head.

"No, I do not," he replied; "and I care a good deal less."

"Oh, yo' don' keer, hey?"

"I do not."

"Did yo' ever heer tell uv 'Shore Death Seth?'"

Dick shook his head again.

"I never did."

"Humph! That 'counts fur yer torkin' so big, then."

"Is that so?"

"Yas; uf yo' hed heerd tell uv Shore Death Seth, I think yo' would know better than ter tork ter 'im thet way."

"Then you are Mister Shore Death Seth, are you?"

"Thet is me. I'm ther feller."

"Well, that is nothing to me; just step aside, please. I wish to speak to the landlord."

"Oh, yo' do, hey?"

"Yes."

"Waal, but I wants ter speak ter yo', myse'f, furst."

"I haven't any time to fool away. Stand aside."

"Say, yo'd better not tork so sassy, er I'll wring yer neck fur yo'!"

Dick's eyes flashed.

He did not like bullies in general, and the appearance and actions of this one in particular were offensive.

He decided to take the bull by the horns.

"Get out of my way!" he said, sternly. "Get out of the way, or you'll wish that you had!"

The ruffian gasped.

The spectators stared, while exclamations escaped them. They could not understand the affair at all.

They could hardly believe that they had heard aright, but then, the young fellow was a stranger, and did not know what a dangerous man Sure Death Seth was.

This was the way they figured it.

Still Seth had told the young fellow who he was.

The spectators decided to hold their breath and watch and wait.

"Say," said Sure Death Seth, as soon as he could recover his breath, which had been taken away by the youth's words, "wuz yo' torkin' ter me?"

There was a threat in his voice, a threatening look on his ugly face.

But he could not intimidate Dick Slater.

"I certainly was talking to you and to no one else, you big ruffian! Get out of my way!"

"Whut!—yo' call me er ruffian?" he howled. "Me, Shore Death Seth? Say, I've er good min' ter wring thet neck uv your'n!"

Seth reached out his great paw as he spoke, as if with the intention of taking Dick by the neck, but he met with a surprise.

Dick seized the man by the wrist and gave a quick, wrenching twist, which brought a cry of pain and rage from the owner.

Then Dick gave the big fellow a shove and sent him to one side, after which the youth walked up to the desk, behind which sat the landlord.

Dick pretended to be paying no more attention to Sure Death Seth, but in reality he was keeping a close watch on the fellow out of the corner of his eyes.

He saw Seth rush toward him.

He whirled quickly.

"Oh, haven't you had enough?" the youth asked, calmly.
 "Then take that!"

Out shot his fist.

Seth did not know the first principles of the pugilist's art.

He made no effort to parry the blow or to dodge it.

Perhaps he thought the youth could not strike hard, and that the blow would do no damage.

If such was the case, he was quickly undeceived, for the hard fist of the youth caught the ruffian fair between the eyes and he was knocked down in the neatest possible fashion.

Crash!

When the ruffian struck the floor, the building shook.

Cries of wonder went up from the spectators.

"Whut er lick!"

"Et wuz like ther kick uv er mule!"

"Et sart'inly wuz!"

"I never seen nothin' like et!"

"Nur me, neether!"

"Who'd er thort et!"

Such were a few of the exclamations.

The men stared at the youth in open-mouthed amazement.

As for Sure Death Seth, he was seemingly temporarily dazed by the blow and the shock of the fall.

He lay where he had fallen for a few moments, and then as it all came to him suddenly, and he realized what had happened, he leaped to his feet, with a hoarse roar of rage and rushed upon Dick.

The youth gave ground at first.

Sure Death Seth was a large, heavy fellow, and he came on like a mad bull.

Dick did not have to retreat very far, however; he quickly secured an opening and then once, twice his fists shot out and once more down the ruffian went, with a crash.

Again wondering exclamations escaped the spectators.

They could not understand it at all.

They would not have believed it possible that a youth like Dick could overcome the terror, Sure Death Seth—for he was a terror, the bully of the town.

To tell the truth, many were glad to see their bullying comrade taken down in this manner, but they would not have said so, for fear it might get them into trouble with Seth.

The ruffian lay still and blinked up at the ceiling for perhaps half a minute, and then he struggled to a sitting posture.

His ugly face was rapidly swelling, and his eyes were

turning black, where Dick's iron-like knuckles had alighted and the fellow, not handsome at any time, was far from good-looking now.

Seth glared about him.

His eyes rested on Dick and he gave utterance to a hoarse howl of rage.

He scrambled hastily to his feet, his actions being almost as graceful as those of an elephant.

"I'll fix yo' fur this heer!" he cried, hoarsely. "I'm ergoin' ter ha'f kill yo', thet's whut I'm ergoin' ter do!"

"Oh, you threaten too much and do too little!" said Dick, calmly. "You are one of those big, blowing bullies who depend on frightening people, but you can't frighten me."

"Oh, is thet so!" exclaimed Seth. "Waal, I'll show you whether I depen' on skeerin' people er not. Yo' want jes' look out fur me now, I tell yo'!"

As he spoke he advanced, cautiously.

Dick saw what the fellow's scheme was at once.

Having got the worst of it at long range fisticuff work he was going to try to get hold of his antagonist.

Seth evidently thought himself much stronger than Dick, and felt confident of being able to handle the youth if he could get hold of him.

Of course, Dick could have kept the fellow from getting hold of him, but feeling confident that he could handle his opponent, the youth decided to let the fellow put his plan into execution.

The surprise to him would be all the greater when he found he was not a match for the youth in any way.

So Dick stood still and permitted the ruffian to get within reach of him.

Suddenly Sure Death Seth leaped forward and seized the youth.

"Now I've got you!" the ruffian chuckled. "Now I show yo' whut kin' uv er feller Shore Death Seth is!"

"No; I'll show you and the rest of the people here whut sort of a fellow you are!" retorted Dick.

As Seth leaped upon him, Dick had dodged and wriggled in under the fellow's arms, and he now secured the hold which he wished to get.

The next instant all present, even including Seth himself, were treated to a surprise.

Just how it was done not one could have told, but suddenly up in the air went Seth's heels; the next the spectators saw was Seth's entire body making a revolution in the air.

Dick had "cross-buttocked" his opponent and given him the worst fall a man can get.

Down came the ruffian, head first.

The contest had taken place near the end of the bar.

At this point stood a barrel half filled with water, which was used by the bartenders for washing the glasses and mugs.

Into the barrel, head first, went Sure Death Seth, with a great splash and a gurgling howl.

A shout of laughter went up from the crowd.

The spectacle of the ruffian going head first into the barrel was so comical that they could not help laughing.

"That beats anything I ever saw!"

"Thet's tber furst barth Seth hez took in menny er day!"

"I wonder ef he likes et?"

Evidently Seth did not like the bath.

He began kicking and floundering around, and in doing so managed to upset the barrel.

Out upon the floor poured the water, and then out of the barrel crawled Seth, looking like a drowned rat.

With hair wet and stringing down over his eyes, and water dripping from him—running off him in little streams, in fact, Sure Death Seth made a dash for the door of the tavern.

The laughter of the spectators was ringing in the ruffian's ears, and he wished to get away where he could not hear it.

He jerked the door open and dashed out.

The worthy Mr. Jeff Tompkins—"Big Jeff"—was just on the point of entering, and Seth's head struck Tompkins in the stomach, doubling that gentleman up and sitting him down on the ground with great force.

"Augh-h-h-h-h!" grunted Tompkins, as he struck the ground. Then, as he saw what struck him, he roared:

"What are you about, yo' ha'f-drowned muskrat! Whut d'yo' mean by bumpin' inter a feller in thet fashion?"

But Seth did not stop to explain.

He raced down the street, shedding water at every jump, and disappeared around a corner.

Tompkins rose to his feet, brushed the dirt off his clothes, and entered the tavern, the grinning men making way for him, the door having quickly filled after the departure of Seth, as they wished to see what became of him.

"Whut does this heer mean, ennyhow?" asked Big Jeff, still brushing, as he entered the tavern and looked around him.

The bartenders had already righted the overturned barrel, and were engaged in mopping up the water.

Dick was quietly bargaining with the landlord for a room and board for a few days.

The men who had seen the encounter between Dick and Sure Death Seth were all eager to tell it, and all started to talking at once.

Tompkins could not understand anything that was said, and promptly shut them up.

"Don't all talk at once like a lot of gabbling geese," he cried; "you tell me what has been going on in here!" and he indicated one of the men.

The individual in question, swelling up with delight and importance, proceeded to tell the story of the encounter between the young stranger and Sure Death Seth, and the story did not fall short of the actual facts in the case, by any means.

Tompkins was amazed.

He turned toward Dick and stared at the youth, wonderingly.

"Great guns!" he gasped. "I'd never a-b'leeved thet yo' c'u'd git ther better uv Sure Death Seth! I don' unnerstan' et."

Dick smiled.

"I don't suppose Seth does, either," he replied.

"No, I s'pose not," with a grin; "an' yo' throwed 'im inter ther bar'l, an' thet wuz whut made him so wet? Haw! haw! haw! Thet's ther bes' thing I ever heerd tell on in all my life! Haw! haw! haw!"

The crowd laughed, also, and just then a man burst into the room and cried out:

"Shore Death Seth is a-comin' up ther street with his pistils out, an' cussin' like er pirut! He sw'ars he'll hev ther heart's blood uv ther young feller whut chucked 'im inter ther bar'l uv water!"

CHAPTER XI.

DICK AMAZES THE TORYVILLEITES.

All was confusion in an instant.

The inmates of the tavern began talking excitedly.

They evidently thought it was all up with the young stranger.

Some advised him to run out and escape by the back way.

All assured Dick that Sure Death Seth was a terrible fellow when angry.

According to their say-so, he was "sure death," sure enough.

But to the surprise of all, Big Jeff Tompkins included, the young stranger did not seem to be greatly alarmed.

Nor, indeed, was Dick alarmed.

He had seen too many such fellows as Sure Death Seth, to be afraid of one.

They were bullies who, when once they met their master, would be proven to be the most arrant cowards.

Dick had already gotten the better of the ruffian in a hand-to-hand encounter, and now he felt that if he met the man face to face and disposed of him in an encounter with pistols—which he did not doubt his ability to do—his standing in Toryville would be pretty firmly established.

None of the other bullies and ruffians would be likely to bother him.

This was something to be desired, and Dick was rather eager for the affray than otherwise.

Dick drew a pistol and examined it, to see if the priming was in good order.

"Will some gentleman please step out and tell Mr. Sure Death Seth to come to a stop about a hundred paces down the street?" he asked. "Tell him I will then come forth and do him battle. As soon as we are facing each other in the street we will be at liberty to advance and fire at will, and keep it up till one or both is satisfied."

"I'll tell 'im," said Big Jeff, promptly, and he hastened out of the tavern.

The crowd poured out after him.

All were eager to see the encounter, and hastened to find safe points from which to view the affair.

They had seen such encounters before, and were aware that often the spectators were in more danger than the principals, and the majority were careful to get behind the corners of houses and behind boxes and barrels, and even trees, of which there were a number growing along the street.

Dick was about the last one to leave the tavern, and as he stepped out into the street a cheer went up.

The young stranger had won the admiration of the rough crowd by his ability as a fighter, and they could not help cheering him as he came forth and took up his place in the middle of the street.

Curses, not loud but deep, escaped the lips of Sure Death Seth as he heard the cheers, and realized they were for his hated foe.

"But I'll kill 'im!" he grated between his set teeth. "I'll kill ther cuss, er my name ain't Shore Death Seth no more!"

Big Jeff Tompkins had constituted himself master of ceremonies, and he now called out:

"Jes' wait er minnet, 'gen'lem'n. Our feller citizens uv ther town uv Toryville want fur ter see this heer fight, an' we maus' giv' 'em er few minnets in which ter git heer."

This was the truth.

The people of Toryville were coming to the scene from every direction.

From the windows of houses women were watching.

It was not every day that an affair such as this could be witnessed.

There were so many men on the street that Dick was impressed with the belief that there must be nearly enough to make up a regiment, sure enough.

At last Big Jeff was ready.

"I guess mos' ever'buddy is heer, now," he said; "s' yo' mought ez well go ahead with this heer affa'r. W'en say ther word, yo' kin go fur each other ez soon ez yo' like. One, two, three—go!"

As Jeff shouted out the word, "Go!" Dick and Sure Death Seth began advancing toward each other.

They were hardly within pistol shot distance, and wished to get closer before firing, in order to make as sure of their shots as possible.

Every eye in that great crowd was on the two, watching eagerly and anxiously for the opening of hostilities.

Dick had his wits about him.

He did not intend to let this mountain desperado get the better of him, if he could help it, and he thought that he could.

The youth was calm and cool.

He was not going to throw away any chances.

He was watching his opponent with the eyes of a hawk.

He waited till they were just within pistol shot distance of each other, and then he suddenly threw up his pistol as if to fire.

This was a trick on Dick's part to disconcert his opponent, make him think he (Dick) was going to fire, and if possible draw the fire of the desperado.

The plan succeeded.

Sure Death Seth thought Dick was going to fire, and anxious to get the first shot himself, he quickly leveled his pistol and fired, almost without taking aim.

The bullet went wild, and struck a box behind which a fat citizen had taken refuge, causing him to yell out warnings to "Be keerful, thar! Whut yo' 'bout?"

Instantly Dick leaped forward and ran toward his opponent at the top of his speed.

This move took all by surprise, and a murmur of amazement went up from the spectators.

CHAPTER XII.

DICK IS SURPRISED.

The move took Sure Death Seth by surprise, along with the rest.

It disconcerted him, too, quite a good deal.

He became excited.

He had been engaged in a number of impromptu street fights, with weapons, in his time, and had, usually, managed to come out first best, but he had never been pitted against a man who acted as this young stranger was acting.

The result was that he was, as we have said, disconcerted—in the parlance of to-day, he was “rattled.”

He up with his other pistol and fired quickly.

He did not take aim at all.

It was a snap-shot, and not being an expert with the pistol, he missed again.

Dick heard the bullet whistle, however.

But a miss is as good as a mile, and the youth was not at all worried by the whistle of the bullet.

He was too old a hand for that.

It had now come his turn to act.

His opponent had had two shots; it was his turn to have at least one.

Dick paused as soon as Sure Death Seth fired his second shot.

Up came his right arm.

The pistol was leveled full at the ruffian, and Dick was well within range.

And now the old theory that all bullies and ruffians are at heart cowards, was proven true.

When he had an equal chance with Dick, Sure Death Seth had stood his ground; but now he had fired both pistols and had no loaded weapon left. He was defenseless.

He was at the mercy of his opponent, who had both pistols still ready for use.

As Dick's pistol came to a level, Sure Death Seth suddenly gave utterance to a wild yell, and, turning, fled as if the Old Nick was after him.

No one there had ever seen a man run faster than the frightened ruffian ran.

And at every jump he emitted a yell.

Sure Death Seth was the worst frightened man Toryville had ever seen.

No one had ever suspected that Sure Death Seth was a foot-racer, but he certainly showed all the signs of being a first-rate performer in this line.

That he was possessed of a good pair of lungs was made doubly evident, his yells making almost as much work for his lungs as the running.

The spectators watched Dick and held their breath.

They expected each instant to hear the crack of the pistol and see Sure Death go down—for somehow they had gotten the idea that the young stranger was a good shot.

This was the case.

Dick was a good shot.

There were few as expert with the pistol as was he.

He could have brought the fleeing man down easily, but he could not bring himself to fire.

It would savor too much of assassination, he thought.

He could kill men in battle, or in a combat where it was his life or the other man's; but when the enemy was whipped and running, and there was nothing more to be feared from him, Dick believed in letting him go.

So he lowered his pistol without firing.

This was a surprise to the spectators.

They were not expecting it.

By all the rules of war and of combats of this kind, Dick had a perfect right to shoot his opponent.

It is probable that there was not one in the crowd who would have refrained from doing so, had he been in Dick's place.

Naturally, they had judged the youth by themselves, and his action in refraining from firing was a great surprise to them.

They came forward and crowded around the youth.

“Why didn' yo' shoot ther cuss?” asked Big Jeff Tompkins. “Yo' hed er perfeck right ter do so.”

“I know that,” said Dick, “but it seemed too much like murder to shoot a man in the back. I guess he is punished enough, anyway, as he got well thumped in the first encounter with me, and now he is so badly frightened that he is suffering greatly, no doubt. I guess it is as well to let him go.”

“Waal, yo' air ther one ter say, uv course; but ther hain't menny uv us heer whut would 'a' let 'im go—hey, boys?”

“Yo' air right, Jeff, we wouldn't!”

“We wouldn', thet!”

“No; we'd er giv' 'im one bullet ter remember us by, ennyway!”

“C'u'd yo' er hit 'im, d'yo' think?” asked Tompkins.

“Oh, yes!” replied Dick, quietly. “I am an expert in the use of the pistol. I could have killed him had I wished to do so.”

Some of the spectators looked at each other in a doubtful manner, and Dick, noticing this, said:

“I'll show you. Do you see that bit of paper sticking on that tree, yonder?”

He pointed to a tree standing perhaps a hundred feet distant.

On the tree was a bit of paper perhaps two inches square, a remnant of a proclamation of some kind, which had been tacked there.

“Yes, yes!”

"We see et!"

"Ef yo' kin hit thet, yo' air ther bes' shot in this town!"

"Yo' kain't do et, young feller."

"Ef yo' hits ther tree, yo'll do well."

"Watch," said Dick, quietly.

He leveled the pistol, and, without seeming to more than glance along the barrel, pulled the trigger.

Crack!

The crowd rushed forward, anxious to see the result of the shot.

The first to reach there was Big Jeff.

He set up a shout.

"Hit et plumb centre!" he cried, waving his hand in the air. "Say, young feller," to Dick, "yo' air ther champion pistol shot uv this kentry, an' thet's er fack! I guess yo' wuz right w'en yo' sed yo' c'u'd a-killed Seth ef yo' hed wanted ter."

"Yas; et would hev be'n all up with Seth!"

"I wouldn' hev b'leeved thet anybuddy c'u'd shoot like thet with er pistil, ef I hedn' seen et!"

Such were a few of the exclamations from the members of the crowd.

They were greatly excited over the wonderful shot of the stranger who had come among them.

They could not help feeling admiration for one who could get the better of Sure Death Seth in a personal encounter, and then frighten him so that he ran for his life; and now that they knew the youth was a dead shot with the pistol, they could not refrain from giving expression to their admiration.

They were still examining the bullet-mark in the tree, when a cry from one of the men attracted the attention of all:

"Look yonder! There comes another stranger! He's a young fellow, too!"

Dick, in common with the rest of the crowd, looked down the street and saw a horseman approaching at a gallop.

He thought there was something familiar about the looks of the horse and rider, and it turned out that this was the case, for when the newcomer was within a hundred feet of the crowd Dick suddenly exclaimed, under his breath:

"Great guns! it is Bob! I wonder what can bring him here?"

CHAPTER XIII.

SOME REDCOATS ARRIVE.

It was, indeed, Bob Estabrook, Dick's nearest and dearest friend and chum, and the second in command of the company of "Liberty Boys."

When Dick left the patriot encampment at Camden, had left Bob there, and until this moment had supposed him to be there still.

Naturally, therefore, he was greatly surprised to see him here in Toryville.

Dick could not think why his friend had come.

Of course, he did not dare recognize Bob—or let spectators know that he recognized him, rather, and he put on a look of curiosity and surveyed Bob with the look which he would have given a stranger.

Bob was smart enough to know what to do, too.

He did not let on that he had ever seen Dick.

"How are you, gentlemen?" Bob greeted, politely, and he drew rein.

"How air yo'."

"Ther same ter yo'."

"Howdy, yo'se'f."

Such were a few of the replies to Bob's salutation, though the majority merely nodded.

Big Jeff Tompkins now stepped forward.

"Who air yo', young feller?" he asked.

"My name is Robert Wilson."

"Bob Wilson, eh?"

"Yes."

"Whar yo' frum?"

"I live in the North, but am down here for my health."

The people looked at each other, and then at Dick.

By accident Bob had told the same story that Dick had told.

Big Jeff turned toward Dick and grinned.

"Heer's another inverlid!" he said. "I wonder, no ef he hez recovered ter ther extent thet yo' hev, Bob Burton?"

It will be remembered that this was the name Dick had given when he first came to Toryville.

Dick smiled.

He knew this was meant as a compliment to him.

"I don't know, I'm sure," he replied.

"Whut d'yo' want heer in Toryville, Bob Wilson?" asked Jeff.

"I heard that a regiment was being organized, and came here for the purpose of joining the regiment."

"Is thet so? Waal, thet's strange; this heer young feller," indicating Dick, "hez come heer fur ther same purpose. Waal, ef yo' air ez good er man ez he is, I guess th' won't be no trubble but whut yo' kin jine."

"I shall be glad to do so."

"Yo' air er king's man, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"All right; glad ter heer et. Nobuddy but king's men air erlowed ter stay heer."

"So I understood, and I think it is a good idea."

"Oh, yas; no doubt erbout thet."

"And now, sir, will you tell me where I may secure lodgings?"

Dick now thought it was time for him to say something. He stepped forward.

"I am glad to know you, Bob Wilson," he said, offering his hand; "I have come to Toryville for the same purpose which brings you here, and I hope and trust that we will be good friends. My name is Ben Burton."

Bob shook Dick's hand as heartily as if they were strangers, and said:

"I am glad to know you, Ben Burton."

"Come with me," said Dick; "I am stopping at a tavern, just up the street, and you will find it a good place, I think. They will take care of your horse, also, as there is a stable in connection with the tavern."

"Good! and thank you. I will go with you."

Bob leaped to the ground, and they walked toward the tavern, the horse being led, and the crowd parted to let them through.

Dick had made such an impression by his prowess, and by his expertness with the pistol that they were glad to make way for him.

The two reached the tavern, and Bob turned his horse over to the hostler.

Then they entered the tavern.

The tavernkeeper came forward to meet them, and seizing Dick's hand, shook it.

"Young man, I congratulate you!" he said. "You are a wonder! I am exceedingly glad that you got the better of Sure Death Seth, who is a ruffian and desperado, and I shall be glad if he never again shows his face in Toryville."

"Thank you," smiled Dick; "I didn't expect that he would take to his heels and flee in the fashion that he did, but I guess it is just as well, as it saved me the trouble and necessity of putting a bullet through him."

"What is this?" asked Bob, in wonder. "What have you been doing, D—Ben?"

He had come within an ace of saying "Dick."

"Oh, nothing much," laughed Dick.

"He says it is nothing, but it was a great deal," said the tavernkeeper; "he thrashed the worst desperado of this community, and then fought a pistol duel with him. And after Sure Death Seth, that is the ruffian's name, had fired both his pistols, and it was this young man's turn,

the coward took to his heels and ran for his life. He was afraid to stand up and take his turn at being shot at."

Dick laughed again, in a careless manner, as if the matter did not amount to much, and then asked if there was a room for his companion.

"He has just arrived, and is going to join the regiment, the same as I am," explained Dick; "and we will wish rooms till the regiment is organized and ready to leave here."

"Jove! I'm sorry, but I haven't another vacant room," said the landlord. "I assigned the last one to you."

"Perhaps you young gentlemen would not object to occupying the room jointly?"

Of course, this was just the thing of all things that the youths desired, but it would not do to let this be known, so they looked at each other for a few moments, in pretended doubt, as if trying to see what they thought of each other, and then Dick said:

"I can't say that I have any objections, landlord. I am willing to share my room with the young man, if he wishes it."

"I shall be glad to be allowed to share the room," said Bob.

Then the two went up to their room.

As soon as the door was closed and locked, Dick turned to his companion.

"Now, Bob, explain," he said. "How happens it that you have come to this place?"

"I'll tell you, Dick: General Greene sent me."

Dick was surprised.

"He did?" he exclaimed.

"Yes; he called me to him, not long after you left, and told me where you were going, and said that you were taking such a fearful risk in venturing into the heart of the Tory country, and right into Toryville, that he felt that he should send some one to help you in case you got into trouble."

"That was good of him, Bob; but I think there is not much danger."

"Well, there may not be, but at the same time, if there are two of us we may be able to pull through in safety, where one would be helpless."

"True, Bob; but I don't think it will be necessary to remain here long."

"You don't?"

"No; I am already certain that a regiment of Tories is being organized, and all that will be necessary is for us to ascertain some of the details regarding the proposed movements of the regiment. As soon as we have done this we will be ready to go back."

The youths talked for some time, and then went back down into the office and barroom.

When they entered the room the inmates were just leaving it in great haste.

"What is the trouble?" asked Dick of the landlord.

"Some British officers coming to take charge of the regiment and drill it," was the reply.

"Is that so? Where are they from?"

"From Lord Rawdon's army at Orangeburg."

"Ah! and they are coming now, you say?"

"Yes; they are coming up the street. Don't you hear the people shouting?"

Dick and Bob glanced at each other in consternation.

Dick was known personally by a number of the officers of Lord Rawdon's army—would any of those coming be of the number who knew him?

This was the question which flashed through the minds of Dick and Bob.

As the two walked toward the door, to follow the others, Dick whispered in Bob's ear:

"They won't know you, anyway, Bob, so if they should recognize me, you remain and learn all that you can, and I will hunt a hiding place in the mountains two miles south from here."

"All right, Dick."

The two stepped through the doorway out upon the street.

The officers in question—there were four of them—had just dismounted in front of the tavern, and as they started toward the door they came face to face with Dick and Bob.

One of the four suddenly uttered an exclamation.

He pointed his finger at Dick.

"Quick! seize that fellow!" he cried. "He is Dick Slater, the famous rebel spy, on whose head there is a reward of five hundred pounds. Seize him!"

There was a tableau of astonishment.

The spectators stared, open-mouthed.

Dick was the first to act.

CHAPTER XIV.

OVER THE FALLS.

He suddenly bounded away and ran down the street with the speed of a greyhound.

"After him!" roared the officer. "After him! Don't let him escape! Remember, it is five hundred pounds in the pockets of the men who capture that fellow!"

Instantly there was a wild scramble.

The Tories gave chase.

They ran after the fleeing youth with all their might, and many of them drew pistols as they ran.

"Get him dead, if you can't catch him alive!" the officer shouted, and his words were followed by the crack! crack! of firearms.

Bob was fearful that his comrade would be killed.

He would have done anything, almost, to save his friend, but there was nothing he could do.

All he could do was to stand there and watch the chase.

As Dick raced down the street he saw Tories coming up the street to meet him.

He was practically between two fires.

He would soon be hemmed in and would be either captured or shot.

Dick came to a point where the street crossed a stone bridge.

There was a deep stream running right through the centre of the town, and the bridge was over the stream.

Dick paused and glanced back over his shoulder.

His foes were not far distant and were coming rapidly.

A lot more were coming from the other direction.

It would be suicidal to remain where he was, or to try to go on down the street.

He could not go back.

There was only one thing to do.

That was to leap over the side of the bridge, into the stream.

It was taking a fearful risk, but Dick Slater was equal to it and he plunged from the bridge into the stream, just as the Tories fired another volley.

The stream was a swift-flowing mountain torrent.

It was both deep and swift.

Dick went under, out of sight, when he struck the water, so was not injured by the fall.

The Tories set up a shout as the youth plunged from the bridge.

They thought sure that they would soon capture him.

But they did not know the youth with whom they were dealing.

He would rather take all kinds of chances than to allow them to capture him.

So he struck out down the stream, with lusty strokes, the instant he came to the surface.

The stream flowed so swiftly and strongly that he was carried rapidly along, anyway, and when in addition to this he swam with all his might, Dick moved very rapidly.

The Tories paused at the bridge and looked at the swimming youth in surprise.

"Stop!" they called out. "Go ashore, or you are a dead man! If you let yourself be drawn into the mouth of the cavern yonder you will never come forth alive! There is a waterfall just beyond the cavern, two hundred feet deep. If you are swept over that you will be dashed to pieces on the rocks below."

Dick heard, but he did not heed.

He set his teeth, grimly, and swam as strongly as ever. "Better the rocks than to let you capture and hang me!" he murmured. "I'll risk the cavern and the waterfall."

Onward he swam.

The Tories continued to shout to him to come ashore. But Dick paid no attention to them.

He kept on his way.

Seeing this, the Tories fired a volley.

The distance was too great, however, and most of the bullets failed to reach the vicinity of the youth.

"Very kind of you!" murmured Dick, ironically. "I suppose you think that death by bullet would be easier for me than death by being dashed on a rock at the bottom of the waterfall, and fired at me in the kindness of your parts!"

"Oh, say! Swim ashore while you have time!" shouted a Tory. "You will never come out alive if you let yourself be carried into the mouth of that cavern!"

But Dick continued onward, though now he simply let the current carry him along.

He wished to save his strength.

If the Tories were telling the truth, he would need all his strength very soon.

It was not more than a quarter of a mile from the ledge to the entrance to the cavern, which was in the face of a high bluff which bordered Toryville on the south side.

Dick was now almost to the cavern.

The youth calculated the chances for making his escape, in case he should go ashore, but saw that he would be unable to do so.

The Tories could easily head him off and capture him. There was only one thing to do.

That was to enter the cavern and risk going over the waterfall.

Dick thought that he might be able to land somewhere within the cavern, or on the other side of it, before going over the falls, and made up his mind to try it, anyway.

He was determined that the Tories should not capture him.

A few moments later he entered the mouth of the cavern.

At first he could see tolerably well, but it soon grew

so dark he could scarcely see at all, and although he swam to the side of the stream he could not make a landing for the reason that there was nothing but a rock wall, which was absolutely vertical.

It was the same on both sides, as Dick learned by swimming from first one side to the other, and although he kept this up, he found no place where he could effect a landing.

He was carried onward with resistless force, the stream flowing even more swiftly here than on the outside.

Suddenly he shot out of the cavern, however, into the full glare of the light of day.

He looked up and saw that the stream was running along at the bottom of a deep, narrow gorge, the walls of which were a thousand feet high, at least.

The walls came right straight down to the water's edge, and although he looked eagerly, anxiously, Dick could see no place where it would be possible to effect a landing.

More, there was not even an outjutting crag, or anything to which he could hold, to stay his progress.

And now, as he rounded a bend in the gorge, a terrible roaring sound came to his hearing.

"The falls!" thought Dick. "Jove! I guess I am in for it, this time!"

Onward he was swept, and suddenly he was carried around another bend, and as he rounded it a cry—of amazement, consternation, almost terror—escaped the youth's lips.

Right before him was a white wall of foam, marking the line where the water dashed over the precipice.

The roar of the cataract was almost deafening.

Dick was helpless.

He could not make a landing at either side; neither could he stay his progress.

Dick looked up at the blue sky, murmured a brief prayer, and the next instant shot over the falls as if thrown from a catapult.

Down—down—down! he went.

The thought flashed through the youth's mind that he was never going to reach the bottom.

Then he felt a shock and knew no more.

CHAPTER XV.

A MUTUAL SURPRISE.

When Dick came to, he was lying on a little sand bar, in a bend in the stream.

He was perhaps two hundred yards below the falls, which were in plain sight.

They were roaring and rumbling at a terrible rate, and as Dick looked he shuddered.

He could not imagine how he had ever succeeded in coming over those falls without losing his life.

And so far as he could judge he was not even seriously injured.

Dick rose to a sitting posture and then to his feet.

He found that all his limbs were sound, but there were numerous sore spots on his body.

These were where he had struck against rocks, while being swept along, below the falls.

"Well, I'm alive, and that is the main thing," thought Dick.

Dick moved about on the sand bar till he was limbered up, and then he began the ascent of the bluff behind him.

The walls of the stream had widened out considerably, and were not so steep as was the case above the falls, and Dick thought it possible he might climb out of the gorge.

It was hard work, climbing, for the youth found that he was weaker than was usual with him.

He persevered, however.

The result was that he finally succeeded in climbing out of the gorge.

Dick decided to wait till night, and then slip back into Toryville and secure his horse.

Then, too, he wished to get something to eat; also, he wished to see Bob.

He waited till nearly sundown, and then he climbed over the top of the ridge and made his way slowly and cautiously in the direction of the town.

He reached a point from which he could look down upon the town, just as the sun disappeared behind the mountains to the west, and here he paused and waited another hour.

It was now quite dark, and Dick made his way in the direction of Toryville.

It was dangerous work climbing down the mountain in the darkness, but Dick was a good hand at this sort of work, and finally succeeded in reaching the level of the valley.

There were no street lamps in Toryville, and Dick stole down the street, seemingly in as great safety as if he were not in a town where every one was an enemy—with one exception.

Presently Dick reached the hotel.

He stole around to the rear.

He knew better than to try to enter by the front door.

By watching his chance, Dick managed to enter the kitchen when the cook was absent, and then he stole across the kitchen and into the hall.

There was a back stairway leading to the rooms at the rear, and Dick made his way up the stairs.

He reached the upper hall and made his way along it.

He was on his guard, for he feared that at any moment some one might step out of some one of the rooms and discover him.

Luck was with him, however.

He saw no one, and presently reached the door of the room which he and Bob had intended to occupy jointly, and which Dick supposed Bob would occupy.

Dick tried the door.

It opened at his touch.

"Good! I'll go in and see if Bob is there," thought Dick; "and if he isn't, I'll wait till he comes."

Dick entered the room and closed the door behind him.

It was dark in the room.

Dick could see only very indistinctly.

He stood still and called out, in a cautious voice:

"Bob! are you here?"

There was no reply, and Dick knew the room was not occupied save by himself.

This suited Dick, first-rate.

He made his way across the room and seated himself in a chair.

He thought it likely Bob would come to the room presently.

The youth waited perhaps half an hour, and then he heard steps in the hall.

Some one was coming.

"I hope it is Bob," thought Dick.

The steps ceased in front of the room.

"Yes, it is Bob!" said Dick to himself. "Won't he be surprised when he sees me?"

There was a fumbling at the door and then it opened.

The newcomer stepped through into the room and closed the door.

Dick stared at the newcomer in amazement.

It was not Bob.

Instead it was one of the British officers who had come to the town that day—in fact, it was the one who had recognized Dick and caused him to have to flee.

The officer held a candle in his hand, and for a few moments the two stared at each other.

CHAPTER XVI.

LIVELY TIMES.

"Dick Slater, by all that is wonderful!" suddenly exclaimed the redcoat.

"At your service!" replied Dick.

The man seemed dazed.

He could evidently hardly believe the evidence of his own eyes.

"But you went into the cavern—I saw you myself," said the redcoat; "and all whom I talked with said it would be impossible for any one to enter there and come forth alive."

Dick smiled.

"You have evidence before you to prove that they lied," said Dick, quietly.

"And you are really alive?"

"As you will speedily realize."

Dick had been gradually drawing himself together; every muscle was set, every nerve tense, and as he spoke he quickly rose to his feet and leaped upon the officer, with the ferocity of a tiger.

The man saw what was coming, too late.

He attempted to draw a pistol, but did not have time.

Dick was upon him and had him in such a manner that he could not draw a weapon, for an instant.

The redcoat was gritty, however.

He started in to make as good a fight as possible.

Doubtless he thought he would be a match for the youth.

If such was his thought he speedily discovered his mistake.

Dick was the stronger and much more skilled in hand-to-hand encounters.

Too late the redcoat realized this, for when he attempted to yell for help, presently, he found his throat grasped by a hand of iron, and the yell died away to a gurgling groan.

Dick had secured the hold which he had been working to secure, and he made the most of it.

He choked the redcoat till his face grew as red as his coat.

The fellow gasped and gurgled, and did his best to try to get his breath, but could not.

His face grew almost black, his eyes seemed about to burst from their sockets, and then suddenly the officer lost consciousness.

When sure of this fact, Dick eased the insensible form back to the floor and picked up the candle which had fallen to the floor, but was still burning.

Placing the candle on the stand, Dick stepped to the door and bolted it.

Then he stepped to the side of the redcoat and looked at him, reflectively.

"I believe I will change my wet clothes for dry ones," thought Dick; "I will feel more comfortable, then."

Dick hastened to put his plan into effect.

He doffed his own clothing, and taking the clothes off the body of the insensible redcoat, donned them.

Then he lifted the redcoat and placed him on the bed.

"He will be comfortable there," thought Dick; "but in order that he may not arouse everybody in the tavern I will bind and gag him."

Dick quickly accomplished this, and the officer was trussed up and gagged in a jiffy.

What pleased Dick now was the fact that he found himself possessed of a good saber and three fine pistols.

"The captain was well armed, anyway," thought Dick; "I'm glad of that."

At this instant Dick heard footsteps in the hall.

They ceased in front of the door.

Then there came a knock.

"I wonder who that can be?" thought Dick. "One of the captain's comrades, I am afraid."

"Who is there?" he called out, imitating the tone of the captain as nearly as he was able.

"It is I, Starkley," was the reply; "I think you had better come downstairs for a few minutes, captain. I am afraid there is going to be trouble. The men are accusing that young fellow, Bob Wilson, of being a friend and comrade of Dick Slater, the rebel spy, and although he denies it, the men don't believe him, and there will likely be a fight."

At this instant the sound of scuffling and loud yells came up from below.

"They're at it!" cried Starkley. "Will you come?"

"Yes, yes!" replied Dick.

He unbolted the door, opened it and leaped out into the hall and raced after Starkley, who was hurrying toward the stairs at the end of the hall.

Dick was soon right at Starkley's heels, and they went down the stairs in a hurry and burst into the large office and barroom like twin cyclones.

The scene which met their gaze when they entered was an exciting one.

A couple of the Tories were just arising to their feet, they having undoubtedly been knocked down by Bob, who stood with his back to the wall and pistol in each hand, holding the crowd at bay.

Around him, glaring at him angrily, were a dozen of the Tories.

"Don't attempt to draw your weapons!" cried Bob, as Dick entered the room. "If you do, I shall fire; and I warn you that I am a dead shot!"

The warning was evidently needed, for a number of the men were fingering their weapons.

It was equally evident, however, that Bob could not hope to hold out against such odds.

Dick, too, realized that whatever he did must be done quickly, for Starkley would see at once that he was not the British captain, but an impostor, and he might even recognize him.

"Scatter, everybody!" called Dick, in a voice which was a good imitation of the British captain's. "Get away from here and let this young man alone. He is not a rebel, but a true-hearted loyalist!"

Dick had his hat pulled well down over his eyes.

The men crowding about Bob dispersed from his immediate vicinity, now, though some of them grumbled.

Dick stalked majestically to the door.

Pausing there he pointed his finger at Bob.

"Young man, step out here with me for a few moments," he said; "I wish to speak to you."

Bob had recognized Dick, and while delighted to know that his comrade was alive, he was tortured with fear that Dick would be recognized and would lose his life, after all.

Bob wondered how Dick happened to be in the tavern, and wearing a British uniform.

There was no time for delay, however.

Bob knew that Dick's action in telling him to come outside was but a shrewd device to get him out of the tavern and danger, and he said, promptly:

"All right, sir; I'm coming."

He walked quickly to the door, but before they could leave the room a man clad only in a blanket, which was wrapped about him, rushed through the open doorway which led from the hallway leading to the stairs.

It was the captain whom Dick had made a prisoner and left tied, hand and foot, on the bed up in his room.

In some manner he had succeeded in freeing himself.

He pointed toward Dick and cried, in a loud, excited voice:

"Seize him! That is Dick Slater, the rebel spy, in my uniform! Seize the scoundrel!"

CHAPTER XVII.

DICK AND BOB DO SOME DODGING.

Of course, the appearance of the captain clad in a blanket, and his excited words, caused a sensation.

So great a sensation in fact that for a few moments no one moved.

They could only stare in amazement, for the time being paralyzed.

It was the most remarkable thing they had ever heard of. Such daring was beyond their comprehension.

Then, too, they had supposed that Dick Slater, the rebel spy, had gone to sure death down the stream and through the cavern leading to the falls.

When he disappeared through the opening to the cavern that day, they had given him up for dead.

And now to see him here, alive and well, and engaged in more daring work, was almost too much for the people of Toryville.

What manner of youth was this young fellow, anyway?

This was the question which flashed through their minds.

As for Dick and Bob, having reached the doorway, they lost no time in getting through it and out of doors.

They realized that they were in great danger.

The temporary dazing of the Toryvilletes afforded them the opportunity to get out of the room in safety, and they were not slow to make the most of the opportunity.

The instant the youths disappeared, however, the Tories came to, so to speak.

"Seize them!" howled the beblanketed captain. "Don't let them escape! Five pounds to the man who captures either of them!"

The Tories rushed out of the tavern, pell-mell.

They uttered wild shouts as they did so.

They were after youths, however, who cared nothing for shouts.

They were not the sort who could be frightened by noise.

Dick and Bob darted to the corner of the tavern, and seeing some men coming up the street, they leaped around the corner of the building and ran along its side.

Reaching the rear, they again turned and came upon a cellarway.

"The very thing!" murmured Dick.

He stooped and opened the door.

"Down with you, Bob!" he said, in a quick, eager voice.

Bob passed through the opening and made his way down the steps.

Dick followed and lowered the door, just as half a dozen Tories came rushing around the corner.

"Where did they go?"

"I'm sure they came back this way."

"Yes, they couldn't have gotten out of sight down the street."

"Maybe they went to the stable."

"That's it; they've taken refuge in the stable!"

"Come on, fellows!"

There was the sound of rushing feet.

Dick tried the door opening into the cellar. It was fastened. The fastening was upon the inside of the cellar. Dick drew back and then threw himself against the door with all his force. There was a crash. The fastening had given way. The door flew open and Dick went through the opening and fell upon his hands and knees. At the same instant a voice was heard to cry out: "What was that noise?" The crash had been heard. And where was it?" asked another. It seemed to come from down in the cellar. "So it did." "Maybe the rebels are down there." "Maybe they are." "Let's see!" "All right; go ahead." "No; you go first." "Come; we'll go together." Evidently the two Tories were a bit dubious about venturing to explore the region from whence had come the crashing sound. Meantime, Dick and Bob had been making the best of their opportunities. They had entered the cellar, but as it was very dark there they had to feel their way. This, of course, made their progress very slow. They did not know what they would find. They heard the conversation between the two Tories, however, and realized that they must make haste if they would escape discovery. They realized that in all probability there was no place in the cellar where they could conceal themselves, and their idea was to find the stairs and go up into the kitchen and try to get out of the house unseen, after things quieted down. While they were making their way across the cellar, they heard the cellarway door open. "The Tories were coming!" The youths stepped more quickly, at the risk of making noise enough to be heard by their enemies, and a few moments later they found the stairs leading to the floor above. The youths hastened up the stairs, being careful, of course, to not make any noise. They had almost reached the top of the stairs when they heard the Tories give utterance to exclamations. "The door is open!" cried one of the Tories.

"The rebels are down there, I'll wager," from the other. "Let's give the alarm." "All right. Let's go back up and close the cellar door, and then while you stand guard I'll go and tell our comrades that we have the rebels caged." There was the patter of feet on the steps and then the cellarway door went shut with a slam. "The cellar will be full of Tories in a minute, Bob," said Dick. "We must get out of here." "So we must," agreed Bob. Dick tried the door at the top of the stairs. It was not locked. He opened the door a few inches and peered through. He was looking into the kitchen. No one was in sight. Dick pushed the door still farther open and stuck his head through the opening. There was no one in the kitchen. Dick stepped quickly through into the room and Bob followed. Then Dick closed the door and bolted it. "That bolt will keep them from getting through in a hurry," he remarked. At this instant they heard footsteps approaching. Dick judged it must be the cook coming. If the cook saw them and gave the alarm they would certainly be captured. The youths hastened across the kitchen floor. They walked on tiptoe so as to make no noise. Reaching a door at the farther side of the room, Dick opened it and a moment later they were in a hall. There was a stairway leading to the upper floor, and the youths hastened to ascend the stairs. As soon as they reached the hall they made their way toward the front of the building. Just as they came opposite the room in which Dick had had his encounter with the British captain, the door opened and out stepped the captain. After giving the alarm down in the office the captain had hastened back up to the room, and doffing his blanket suit had donned an extra uniform which he had brought with him. To say that the captain was surprised when he came face to face with Dick and Bob is stating it very mildly. He was almost paralyzed, but did manage to gasp out: "You—here!" "As you see," remarked Dick. The captain opened his mouth to utter a yell. But he did not utter it. Out shot Dick's hand.

It grasped the captain's throat in a grip of iron. The yell which the captain had started to emit died away in a gurgle.

The captain kicked and squirmed and struggled.

All to no avail.

He could not free his throat from that terrible grip.

Dick quickly choked the captain into a state of insensibility.

For the second time that night the captain had gone through this experience.

Doubtless if he lived to be a hundred years old he would never forget the sensation caused by the clutch of the steel-like fingers of Dick Slater.

At this instant the youths heard the sound of trampling feet in the hall below.

Dick quickly dragged the insensible form of the captain back into the bedroom, and, then coming out, closed the door.

Then the youths hastened along the hall to its end.

There was a window here and Dick raised it.

Dick remembered that there was an awning in front of the tavern, and he and Bob climbed out upon this awning.

Dick closed the window and then both the youths took a survey of the situation.

So far as they could see the coast was clear.

It was so dark they could not see anything distinctly save at a short distance, and no one was in sight near at hand.

They made their way carefully down to the edge of the awning.

It was about ten feet to the ground and the youths made the leap without hesitation.

They alighted on their feet and gave a quick glance around them.

At this instant half a dozen Tories came rushing forth from the tavern.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DICK AND BOB ESCAPE.

The opening of the door let a flood of light stream out.

Dick and Bob were right in the path of the light.

The Tories saw the youths and gave utterance to loud yells.

"Here they are!" cried one.

"We've got them now!" cried another.

This declaration was a little bit premature, however.

They did not have Dick and Bob yet.

The youths whirled and darted away down the street at the top of their speed.

The Tories struck out in pursuit.

They chased the youths some little distance before they bethought themselves that they had pistols and that it would be better to shoot the rebels down than to allow them to escape.

When they did think of this they drew their pistols and fired a volley.

A pistol is a hard weapon to fire accurately with under the most favorable circumstances, so when the person who does the shooting is running at the top of his speed and is unable to see the target he is trying to hit, it would be almost a miracle if he should hit it.

Dick and Bob were uninjured.

Not a bullet touched them.

The youths continued to run at the top of their speed and were going with such force that when they suddenly encountered a party of Tories they crashed through the line without difficulty, and went on their way.

By the time the Tories got straightened up, after the youths tore through their ranks, the other Tories—the ones chasing Dick and Bob—were upon them; and by the time they got straightened out and in shape to continue the pursuit, the youths had secured a good lead.

They did not encounter any more Tories, and were soon out of the town.

As soon as they reached the gulch they turned aside and climbed its side till they felt that they were safe from pursuit.

Then they paused and threw themselves down to rest.

"Well, we got away, anyway, Dick," said Bob.

"Yes; but it was a close call, Bob."

"So it was; but you must have had the closest call, Dick. When I saw you disappear into the mouth of the cavern I thought I should never see you again. Was there a waterfall two hundred feet in depth on the other side of the cavern?"

"There was a waterfall there, Bob, but just how deep it was I cannot say."

"Surely you didn't go over it, Dick?"

"I certainly did."

"Goodness! I don't see how you escaped being killed."

"Nor do I, Bob. I was rendered unconscious by the fall, and when I came to I was lying on a sand bar below the falls."

"Great guns! you did have a narrow escape, sure enough!"

"You're right, Bob. I don't care about taking that lunge again."

"I shouldn't think you would."

The youths lay there and discussed the situation for an hour.

They realized that it would not do to try to stay longer in Toryville.

The people were on their guard now, and it would be impossible for the youths to spend any more time in the town.

But, after all, the youths reasoned, it was not necessary that they should remain.

They had learned what they had come there to learn. They had learned that a regiment was being organized and that as soon as it was ready it would go to the assistance of Lord Rawdon.

They had found Toryville and knew the route the regiment would take in going to join the British army at Orangeburg.

They might as well return to Camden and make their report.

Then General Greene could take such measures for capturing or dispersing the Tory regiment as he thought best.

It was finally decided to do this.

But they could not return afoot.

They would have to have horses.

Their horses were in the stable at the tavern in Toryville, and it would be a difficult matter to secure the animals; nevertheless the youths were determined to make the attempt.

It would not be safe to try to do this until late at night.

They would wait till midnight, at least, before making the attempt.

The time passed very slowly.

The youths had long ago learned the lesson of patience.

In their work it was necessary that they should have patience, for often the only way to accomplish their purpose was by watching and waiting.

The hours passed slowly away.

About midnight the youths left their hiding place and made their way back down into the gulch.

They followed it till they reached the valley, and then they hastened onward toward Toryville.

A brisk walk brought them to the edge of the town, and then they slackened their pace and advanced slowly and cautiously.

The Tories had not yet become sufficiently imbued with the military spirit to cause them to post sentinels at night, so the youths had no difficulty in entering the town.

They made their way up the street till they came to the tavern which had been the scene of such exciting events earlier in the evening.

Now all was quiet.

The youths left the sidewalk and made their way back to the stable at the rear of the tavern.

They moved very carefully, for they felt sure that there was some one sleeping in the stable.

The youths succeeded in finding their horses and the saddles and bridles, even though it was dark, and ten minutes later they led the animals out of the stable.

As they were in the act of mounting they were startled by hearing a voice yell:

"Thieves! Murder! Help!"

It was the hostler.

The youths rode out to the street, and just as they reached it there came a loud report which sounded like a baby cannon and a lot of fine shot rattled about the youths.

The hostler had fired an old musket which he kept on hand, loaded with small shot intended for rats which infested the stable.

The shot did no harm to the youths, but a few of the little leaden pellets struck the horses and caused just sufficient pain to make the animals leap forward and dash away down the street.

The yells of the hostler, the report of the musket, and the clatter of the horses' hoofs on the hard street aroused the people of Toryville, and they came rushing forth in hot haste to see what the trouble was.

They were powerless to stop the flight of the youths, however, and Dick and Bob were soon out of the bounds of the town.

The youths were not expecting pursuit, but they had been riding but a short time when they heard the sound of hoofbeats behind them.

"Do you hear that, Dick?" exclaimed Bob.

"Yes, Bob."

"They're after us!"

"I guess you are right."

The youths soon realized that their pursuers were gaining on them.

"We'll have to ride faster," said Dick.

They urged their horses into a run.

The youths listened intently and judged that they were holding their own.

Presently the gulch was reached and onward through the dark, winding defile the youths rode.

The Tories kept up the chase for a distance of ten miles at least, and then finding that they could not gain on the

fugitives, they gave up in despair, and, turning about, rode back in the direction of Toryville.

When the youths became assured of the fact that the Tories had abandoned the pursuit, they brought their horses down to an ordinary gait.

They rode onward till daylight, and stopped at a farmhouse for breakfast.

They waited an hour to give their horses time to eat and rest, and then, remounting, they rode onward.

They rode all that day and stopped at another farmhouse for the night.

At noon on the next day they rode into the patriot encampment on the hills of Santee.

Their arrival was hailed with delight.

All had felt that Dick Slater was taking a fearful risk in going alone to Toryville, and they were delighted to see him return in safety.

They were almost equally glad to see Bob, as he, like Dick, was a great favorite with the patriot soldiers.

Dick lost no time in reporting to General Greene.

The general greeted Dick with delight.

"I am, indeed, glad to see you back again, Dick!" he exclaimed. "After you started the other day I became fearful that I had sent you on an expedition which might lead to your death."

"So Bob told me," smiled Dick. "Well, I'm alive yet, as you see."

"And I am glad of it. What success did you have, Dick?"

Dick told him.

When he had heard all, he slapped Dick on the shoulder.

"Dick, my boy, you have done splendidly!" he exclaimed. "The information which you bring me is of great importance; now, I think I shall be able to head this Tory regiment off and prevent it from reaching the British army at Orangeburg."

"I hope you will be able to do so, sir."

"I don't think there will be much difficulty about it; I know about what direction they will come from and can arrange it so that we will be able to intercept them."

General Greene then proceeded to ask Dick a number of questions.

In this way he secured information regarding a number of points which had not been touched upon by Dick in making his report.

When at last he was done questioning Dick, General Greene again complimented the youth on his good work, and let him go.

Having secured the necessary information regarding the organizing of the Tory regiment at Toryville, General

Greene began making preparations to spoil the plans of the Tories.

He sent out scouts and spies and told them to keep watch and as soon as they discovered the approach of the Tory regiment for them to come to him with the information.

It was not long before Dick Slater, who was one of the spies in question, came into camp with the information that the Tory regiment was enroute from Toryville to Orangeburg.

He informed General Greene that the regiment was that moment about twenty miles to the southward.

Greene at once sent one thousand of his best men, under the command of Marion and Lee, and instructed them to disperse the regiment and drive the Tories back into the mountains whence they had come.

Dick and his company of "Liberty Boys" went along as a matter of course, and in the encounter with the Tory regiment they did splendid work.

The patriots succeeded beyond their most sanguine expectations.

They were veterans, while the Tory regiment was made up entirely of militia—green hands who had never heard the roar of cannon or smelled the smoke of battle—and the result was that the Tories were quickly routed.

They fled for their lives and the patriots chased them fiercely.

The Tory regiment was scattered to the four winds, and its members made their way back to their mountain fastnesses with all possible speed.

So Dick Slater's fearful risk in venturing into Toryville in the heart of Torydom was not for naught.

Dick was glad that he had taken the risk, and was ready to take more and even greater ones, if necessary, for the cause of Liberty.

THE END.

The next number (50) of "The Liberty Boys of '76" will contain "THE LIBERTY BOYS AROUSED; OR, STRIKING STRONG BLOWS FOR LIBERTY," by Harry Moore.

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